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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7430
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9854
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2001
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4072
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1210
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1986
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 6882
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 7918
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5234
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0453
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 2736
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 0898
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 3249
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 4983
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 1587
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3630
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 9884
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1940
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

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TAGS: [AF](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: PAK SECURITY FORCES CAPTURE HIGH-LEVEL TALIBAN
LEADER MULLAH OBAIDULLAH AKHUND

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) Local newspapers reported on March 2 that Pakistani security forces had captured high-ranking Taliban leader Mullah Obaidullah Akhund, along with up to five others, on February 26 in Quetta. An anonymous Pakistani official said that two of those captured with Obaidullah "could be" Amir Khan Haqqani, a Taliban commander in Zabul, and Abdul Bari, the former governor of Helmand province.

¶2. (S/NF) This is Obaidullah's second arrest. He surrendered to Afghan security forces in early 2002, but was later released as part of a broad Taliban amnesty deal with the Afghan government.

¶3. (S/NF) Comment: This is an important arrest. Many consider Obaidullah to be the military chief of the Taliban forces and the third highest ranking Taliban member. He is also one of the most senior Taliban officials arrested since the group was ousted from power in November 2001. Obaidullah is reputed to be a key Taliban fund-raiser who was responsible for doling out operational funds. Some observers believe Obaidullah's capture could cause logistical and organizational disruptions, albeit only temporarily. End Comment.
CROCKER